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ABSTRACT

Problems in organizational groups are often defined around one pivotal and difficult group member. Based upon C. Stohl and S. Schell's concepts of farrago (a confusing group member who becomes the relational focus of the group), 28 undergraduate students and management personnel who frequently participate in group work were interviewed to validate and expand the farrago concept into primary and secondary provokers. Results indicated that when a primary provoker exhibits confusing behavior, other group members, the secondary provokers, become caught in a web of reciprocal communication with the primary provoker. What results is a "piqued" group whose interactions are aroused and provoked causing the group to become dysfunctional. (A table of data is included; 12 references are attached.) (Author/PRA)

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WHO'S ANNOYING WHO?

PROBLEMS IN ORGANIZATIONAL GROUPS

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Problems in organizational groups are often defined around one pivotal and difficult group member. Based upon Stohl and Schell's concept of farrago--a confusing group member who becomes the relational focus of the group--data were collected to validate and expand their concept into primary and secondary provokers. The primary provoker exhibits confusing behavior--for example, friendly one minute, unfriendly the next. Systemic factors encourage continuation of the confusing behavior and other group members, the secondary provokers, become caught in a web of reciprocal communication with the primary provoker. What results is a "piqued" group, a group whose interactions are aroused and provoked causing the group to become dysfunctional.

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WHO'S ANNOYING WHO?

PROBLEMS IN ORGANIZATIONAL GROUPS

Dysfunctional groups whose members exhibit high tension in their interaction are frequently encountered in organizations. If employees are not currently involved in a dysfunctional group, they can still relate--"just let me tell you about my last group; it was just like that." Sometimes the primary dysfunctional factor of the group is one person and the group can be rearranged around that person to provide more harmonious relationships, or the individual can be replaced or moved to another department. Many times, however, that kind of organizational maneuvering is not possible or practical and group members must rely upon their interpersonal and group communication skills to cope with and manage the group.

Stohl and Schell (1988) identify their theory about such dysfunctional groups with the term--the farrago.

> Farrago, literally meaning mixed fodder for cattle, figuratively is used to describe a medley; a conglomeration, or a confused group. We choose to call our focal actor a farrago because: 1) interaction with a farrago often results in confusion as to roles, group tasks, decision making procedures, etc., and 2) these interactions cause the group itself to become a farrago. The term, therefore, is able to represent both an individual role and a group's interactive system. (p. 4)

While farrago is an uncommon term, the term "jerk" is not. According to Stohl and Schell, the farrago is a dominant focal person who continually drives the other group members crazy because "this individual seems to continually earn the appellations despite demonstrating a high degree of competence on task dimensions critical to the group's performance" (p. 2). The term farrago, however, impedes discussion of the dysfunction. When used, it is unclear if one is referring to the farrago as an individual or the farrago as the group.

The Piqued Group

To distinguish group members from one another, Stohl and Schell's farrago concept is refined to separate the focal person from the other group members. The primary provoker is the group member who is at the center of the group's negative attention. This role is equivalent to Stohl and Schell's individual farrago. This role may not be permanently perceived by the group. The other group members are termed secondary provokers because they provide a backdrop for the primary provoker. As long as other group members are acting in a way to actively support the behavior of the primary provoker or acting in avoidance of the primary provoker, they are secondary provokers. Thus, it is likely that most other group members earn this distinction.

What is not known is the cause of confusion for these dysfunctional groups. Does the primary provoker exhibit sufficiently confusing behavior that other group members become confused in their interactions? Or does the general confusion exhibited by the group encourage the emergence of a primary provoker to become the focal point of the group?

Since a primary provoker could not sustain that role identity as a solo actor, it is necessary to consider the systemic properties of the group. A group of secondary provokers who support (even unintentionally) the development of another group member in the role of primary provoker together comprise a piqued group. This is a group that is aroused or ruffled. The focus of the negative attitudes is within the group; yet, group members have a difficult time accurately identifying the source of the problem. They "feel" the group has problems, but believe few courses of action are available for dealing with them. Thus, the confusing cycle continues unchecked. Within the piqued group, members are behaving in confusing and conflicting fashion--first one way, then the other. If the confusion increases to the point that it is the central issue of the group, group members begin to look within its membership for the problem. Their attention and frustration focuses on the perceived primary provoker. A coalition forms

as members select one group member as the primary provoker never realizing that their own confusing behavior helped to generate that member's central role and that they, in the process, have become secondary provokers. Thus a cycle is started. Secondary provokers can easily point to the primary provoker and label that person as the problem yet seldom examine their own function or participation in the role creation process.

Stohl and Schell (1988) speculate that this type of dysfunctional group has special characteristics. These include: 1) decision making procedures that become complicated or compromised to accommodate the focal person, 2) defining issues in reflection of the focal person, 3) consuming a great deal of energy, both as a group and as individuals, talking about the focal person, 4) exhibiting confusing behaviors in response to the focal person's confusing interaction style, 5) being consumed with the underlying relationships rather than the task, and 6) displaying negative emotions toward both the group and the focal person.

As a result of the misdirected energy and negative emotion, the group becomes centered and defined around this one group member. The energy of the group is misdirected. The focal person displays a wide range of communicative behavior (Stohl & Schell, 1988) which creates and sustains confusion. As an example, the primary provoker is at first unfriendly and sarcastic in dealing with other group members and then in the next interaction attempts to be ingratiating by offering favors.

While it is not uncommon for group members to display a variety of behaviors while achieving personal and group objectives, most people choose from a relatively stable set of interaction behaviors in group situations. Since variation is minimal, patterns of interaction behaviors develop allowing group members to develop expectations about one another. The primary provoker, however, exhibits such wide and constant variation in interaction behavior that other group members do not have a stable interaction history from which to develop interaction expectations.

Within the piqued group concept, the primary provoker is hypothesized to behave erratically--behavior bounces to the extreme locations of all interaction dimensions. These wide swings may imply that a neutral effect emerges--friendly behaviors are offset by unfriendly behaviors. Although a quantitative analysis may result in zero (0) on a given dimension, it is highly unlikely that other group members will perceive the primary provoker's interaction behavior as benign. The only expectation that can be developed for the primary provoker is that he or she will exhibit a variety of interaction behavior. Within the piqued group, the other group members also display wide interaction variation as they reflect the interaction behavior of the primary provoker in attempts to appease and counter, which in turn provides a new source of conflict for the primary provoker. These behavioral variations complicate information dissemination, decision making, and consensus seeking because the other group members never know how the primary provoker is likely to interact--thus ensuring that the group is perceived as dysfunctional by its own group members.

Hypothesis

While Stohl and Schell (1988) present a theoretical foundation for a group phenomenon many people can reference, no data were presented to validate their claims. Using their theoretical framework, the following hypotheses are developed.

H1: The primary provoker is perceived to exhibit confusing behaviors in group interaction.

H2: Group members respond to the primary provoker with confusing behavior.

Data supporting these hypotheses will confirm that the concepts of primary provoker and secondary provoker exist and that widely alternating and confusing interaction behavior underlie the construct. Other characteristics of the piqued group are described as (Stohl and Schell, 1988):

C1: The group fails to deal with task issues.

C2: Group members express negative emotions toward the farrago and the group.

C3: Group decision making is complicated as group members try to avoid or accommodate the farrago.

C4: Group issues are defined around the farrago.

C5: Group members spend extraordinary energy talking about the farrago.

C6: The farrago is a low-ranking member of the group.

C7: The farrago is highly task competent and embodies pivotal values of the group.

C8: The farrago emerges from the interactive system that develops from individual predispositions and system properties.

C9: Group members attempt to resolve the problem by "fixing" the member rather than the interactive system.

Group Field Dynamics (GFD) methodology can be used to test the hypothesis about alternating and confusing behavior; case history analysis can be used to explore the assumed characteristics.

Methodology

Four research assistants asked 28 individuals who acknowledged membership in a work group in their organizational environments to participate in a study about organizational groups. A work group was defined for the prospective participants as a group of three or more people who identified themselves as being interdependent in task activities and having expectations for future group contribution based upon their membership in the group and the group goal. To ensure each individual's sense of group awareness, the research assistants asked each participant to identify the goal the group was striving to accomplish, and to identify group members and their functional role in the group and the organization.

Because of the exploratory nature of this project, a variety of types of participants were approached. Approximately 30% of the participants were undergraduate students in courses or fields of study that required group work (senior seminars for which group work was a significant part of the course grade, and several design groups for a university theatre). The remaining participants were from profit and non-profit organizational environments. Examples of management personnel who agreed to

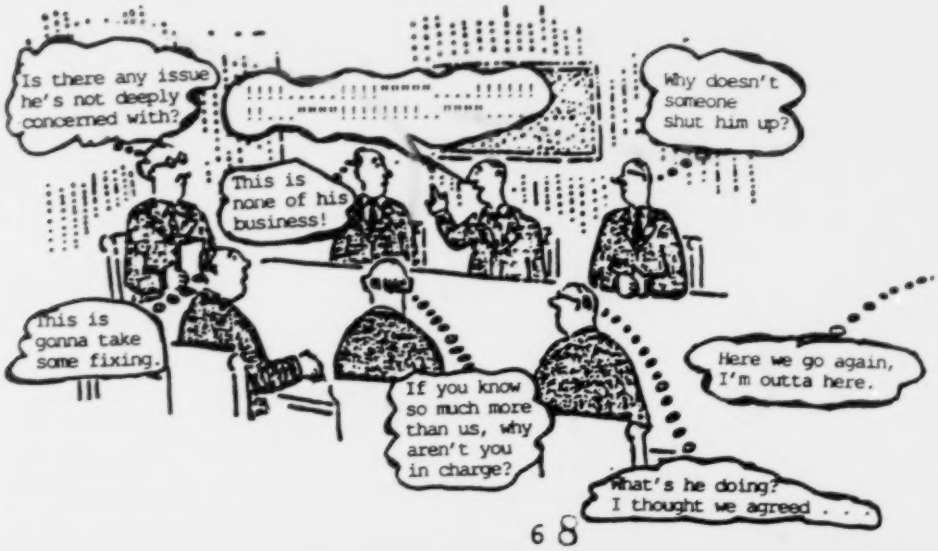
participate included a manager who directed the work activities of counseling psychologists and social workers, a manager of a technical writing division of a laser printing company, supervising radiologists in a large teaching hospital; members of these work groups also participated in the study. Participants were interviewed individually in seclusion from other group members. Their consent was obtained and they were assured that their comments were confidential and would not be available to others.

Stimulus Diagram

To introduce the piqued group concept to participants without biasing the labeling, description, and analysis of their group's interaction, the drawing (See Figure 1) that accompanied Stohl and Schell's essay was presented to the participants. The diagram illustrates a group going nowhere. By reading the comments of each of the group members in the illustration, it is easy to speculate that the group is perceived to be dysfunctional by its members and that the focal person is at least partly responsible for the dysfunction. The diagram does not illustrate confusing or alternating behaviors; thus the concept of the dysfunctional group is introduced, but no precursor as to how the group is dysfunctional is presented. The diagram serves to stimulate recall about a "bad" group from the participant's point of view.

Figure 1

Stimulus Diagram


Is there any issue he's not deeply concerned with?
Why doesn't someone shut him up?
This is none of his business!
This is gonna take some fixing.
If you know so much more than us, why aren't you in charge?
Here we go again, I'm outta here.
What's he doing? I thought we agreed . . .

Upon seeing the diagram, all participants identified with a role in the diagram. Each was asked if they could relate their work group experiences to the picture. If this was confirmed, participants were asked to indicate which role they portrayed. If the person did not personally identify with the primary provoker character (none did), the research assistant pointed to that role character and asked if a person in their work group was like the person illustrated. All indicated that such a person existed in their work group.

Case History

After these identifications, the research assistants again confirmed the participation of the participants; no one refused to continue. The session continued with a standard interview schedule to stimulate a discussion about the individual identified as the primary provoker, the secondary provokers, and the piqued group. Research assistants were instructed to use the labels and identities the participant provided and not to introduce new terminology into the discussion. Stimulus statements were:

1. Tell me a story about the group.

2. Describe the group (the number of people, the type of group, the types of decisions the group makes, etc.)

3. Describe the roles and the status of each group member.

4. (As the research assistants point to the primary provoker) Describe the characteristics of this person in relationship to other group members.

5. Describe the effects of this person on the group.

It should be noted that all participants identified a focal person about whom they had negative feelings and whom they felt contributed to the dysfunctional qualities of the group. After these initial descriptive questions, participants were led through a second interview schedule designed to recall their perceptions and analyses of the primary provoker, and the group. These were:

1. What do you perceive to be the real problem with this person's relationship to the group?

2. Do you think the person is aware he or she is causing that problem in the group?

3. How do you personally deal with this person?

4. If you were called in as an outside consultant to intervene in this group situation, what suggestions would you make?

Group Field Dynamics

A theoretical and methodological schema that can be used to describe potential variation in group interaction behavior is Polley's Group Field Dynamics (GFD) (Polley, 1985, 1986, 1987a, 1987b, & 1988). GFD is a continuation of Bales and Cohen's (1979) three dimensional SYMLOG (System for the Multiple Level Observation of Groups). In GFD, the strengths of SYMLOG theory and methodology are combined with Lewin's Field Theory and Moreno's Sociometry. Like SYMLOG, GFD is both a theory and a method of analyzing face-to-face interaction in group settings.

Polley's refinement of Bales' original configuration results in three behavioral dimensions: 1) dominant-submissive, 2) friendly-unfriendly, and 3) conventional-unconventional. This formulation is superior to SYMLOG for task groups in that emotional references are segregated into one dimension leaving the conventional-unconventional dimension to describe task activity.

The rating instrument is composed of twenty-six adjective phrases describing interaction behavior. Behavior of each dimension (+18 to -18) or pole (+18 to 0) can be expressed as a range within extremes. Keyton and Wall (1989) have explored the use of systems like SYMLOG and GFD. They indicate that these methods are useful for uncovering communication behavior in organizational groups. After the discussions, participants were asked to self-report their responses to the GFD behavioral questionnaire for both themselves and the primary provoker they identified.

In summary, each participant confirmed their role in an organizational work group, confirmed their groups' dysfunctional status, identified another group member in the primary provoker role, provided a descriptive case history, and rated how they perceived their behavior and the behavior of the primary provoker on the GFD

dimensions. The self report GFD data were separated from the perceived GFD ratings of the primary provoker. Data for each group were collapsed to provide a general image of the behavior of both the primary and secondary provoker.

Results

Most commonly, GFD data are reported as positions on the three dimensions. Because the group that is entrenched in a dysfunctional whirl with a primary provoker should minimally experience the alternating and confusing behavior of this person, the GFD dimensions are reported for each pole of the three dimensions (see Table 1).

Table 1

GFD Descriptive Locations

GFD	Mean Location Primary Provoker	Mean Location Secondary Provoker	t	prob.
		Poles (maximum = +18; minimum = 0)		
Dominant	10.71	9.86	not significant	
Submissive	5.39	10.21	8.52	.001
Friendly	6.93	14.82	9.68	.001
Negative	9.18	5.36	-6.01	.001
Conventional	8.04	10.29	3.66	.001
Unconventional	7.93	9.89	2.70	.012
		n = 28		

The differences between the GFD positions of the primary provokers and those of the participants were tested with paired t-tests. These were significant except for the dominant pole position. Primary provokers were perceived to be significantly less submissive, less friendly, more unfriendly, less conventional, and less unconventional than the participants.

Discussion

The GFD methodology is particularly good at describing alternating behavior that can confuse group process. Looking at the six poles (dominance, submissiveness,

friendly, unfriendly, conventional, and unconventional) allows assessment of the parameters of perceived behavioral patterns. Interpretation of the GFD data shows that the primary provokers were perceived as using both dominant and submissive communication but leaving an overall dominant impression; communicating in both friendly and unfriendly terms leaving a slightly overall negative impression; and equally communicating in conventional and unconventional styles.

The self report data indicate that the secondary provokers also exhibit variation in their behaviors. Participants perceived themselves as communicating in both dominant and submissive ways leaving an unclear preference for either behavior; having a strong preference for friendly communication; and communicating in both conventional and unconventional style once again not sending clear signals about their interaction preference on this dimension.

These data indicate that both types of group members exhibit wide swings in behavior. Within a possible 36 unit range, the primary provokers were reported as displaying a 16 point swing on all three dimensions. The participants' ratings covered 20 point swings on all three dimensions. In comparing these data to other studies using GFD or SYMLOG, pole scores greater than five are considered to be an indication of moderate behavior that is noticeable in daily interaction; scores greater than eight or nine are generally interpreted as intense displays of that interaction behavior. Against these benchmarks, the participants perceived both their own interaction behavior and that of the primary provoker as being moderately to strongly exhibited in the group settings.

Stohl and Schell (1988) suggest that the confusing behavior of the primary provoker is such that other group members would likely be swept into the confusion as well. These data verify that both the primary provoker and the other group members exhibit confusing behaviors leaving each other with little opportunity for stable expectation development about the other's behavior. Using the quantitative data, H1

and H2 are confirmed; both the primary provoker and the secondary provoker exhibit confusing behaviors in an identified dysfunctional group.

The case histories were used to further explore the characteristics outlined by Stohl and Schell and to further explain the confusing behavior established by the GFD data. The case histories echo Friedman's (1989) analysis of covert level interactions. While overt emotions are verbalized, covert level interactions stem from the underlying emotions group members have difficulty confronting in face-to-face interactions. "When covert emotions trigger overt discord, group members often project their own unwanted, disowned (and therefore threatening) emotions onto the member who expresses them. The scapegoat (the primary provoker) is targeted as the source of the threatening emotion, although others experience it as well" (p. 45). This type of analysis provides an explanation why group members act as confused as the primary provoker.

Like Stohl and Schell hypothesize, the personalities of the group members may be the cause of the confusion. Other researchers have written about dysfunctional organizational group behavior. For example. Schwartzman (1986) identifies social strivings and previous relational tensions which find their way into the group's interaction. Even though the group acts as if it is doing business, the group members are playing roles; it "is analogous to their jockeying for position within the organization as a whole" (Friedman, 1989, p. 36). This type of analysis points to the general make-up of organizational groups and the need for compatibility to be an important issue if there is the latitude for group assignments to be made. However, groups cannot always be so orchestrated and at some point we would expect professionals to put aside their differences and work together harmoniously regardless of their personality differences.

It is likely that a piqued group can only develop if there are enough members who are dominant enough to joust one another. The data support this assumption. Typically, issues of domination occur early in group life and "the conflict of dominant members with each other, if it exists in the group, is likely to be chronic" (Bales &

Cohen, 1979, p. 58). This concurs with Friedman's (1989) notion that norms are established early in a group's life and a group which has the propensity to be confusing would feed on itself creating new confusion until a breaking point is reached.

However, the case histories indicate that it is likely that a piqued group can operate and achieve its goals while negative personal and working relationships persist. Apparently in some groups, members accept this manner of conducting business. The case histories did reveal that while piqued groups could complete their tasks, they were not particularly efficient in doing so. If group effectiveness criteria include factors of member satisfaction, members of piqued groups would likely rate their satisfaction as low. Many secondary provokers indicated they "couldn't wait until this group was over." Rather than wanting to continue to operate within and be identified with these groups, many secondary provokers perceived these group assignments and tasks as necessary evils that must be completed to satisfy superiors' or organizational requirements. If given a choice, every secondary provoker would choose to select himself or herself out of the group. Thus, C1 suggesting that piqued groups fail to deal with task issues is not supported. Group tasks may be completed, but not in a manner that supports satisfying and enduring work relationships. However, the assumption (C2) that group members will express negative emotions about the primary provoker and the group is underscored. Participants offered a variety of negative expressions in discussing their dysfunctional group.

That relational problems can interfere with a group's decision making activity is an understatement. "If the amount of past scholarly inquiry dealing with interpersonal relationships in groups is any gauge, problems of a relational variety may well be the major cause of a decision-making group's oft noted deficiencies" (Hirokawa & Gouran, 1989, p. 83). C3 suggests that group decision making is complicated as the group tries to either avoid or accommodate the primary provoker and C4 suggests that group

issues are defined around the primary provoker (farrago). One case history paints a vivid picture:

> "If I don't agree with her [the primary provoker's] stand, I just let it drop or try to approach her later. Confronting her in a meeting doesn't do any good. Professional protocol requires that I accept her decisions, behavior, and treatment of subordinates; thus, others usually don't even bother trying to give input into the group discussion. This is done to avoid being either ignored or intimidated."

This report is typical. Group members find it difficult to approach the primary provoker in group meetings so dyadic strategies are developed to deal with the primary provoker in a more private setting. Another coping strategy emerged as group members told of developing rationalizations among themselves about accepting or undoing the decision the primary provoker championed in the meeting. This may be due to the power or grip the primary provoker has over the other group members.

Every case history pointed to group members feeling unfulfilled with the task effectiveness of the group supporting the assumption that group decision making is complicated by the primary provoker. It is difficult to confirm or deny the assumption (C4) that group issues are defined around the primary provoker. But each of the case histories suggest that the primary provoker holds power over the group on task issues because of the strong interpersonal domination over others. As one subject put it, "we are working in a situation that's beyond our control."

With the data collected, it is difficult to test C5 suggesting that group members spend extraordinary energy talking about the primary provoker. The zeal with which participants talked about the primary provoker and their group experiences reflects their intense emotional involvement with the piqued group. The opportunity to talk about a frustrating group experience with someone who is interested, but not involved, may have been a vehicle for purging emotions and a catalyst for the participants'

enthusiasm. However, every participant approached identified with the stimulus diagram and recognized that group as his or her own. It is easy to speculate that group members do talk about the dysfunctional group and the frustrating person.

In looking at the characteristics of the primary provoker described in C6 (low ranking member) and C7 (highly task competent and embodies pivotal values of the group), the case histories provide mixed messages. The primary provokers identified in the case histories were spread among the hierarchical ranks of groups and organizations. Position power could be an issue in these dysfunctional groups; however, not all the primary provokers held high status. Some primary provokers were peers occupying parallel roles and functions to the participants; some were supervisors to the group. About half of the primary provokers were held in high esteem for task abilities by the participants; the others were ridiculed for the inability to perform expediently and effectively. A case history points out:

> "He's not happy doing what he's doing. He is not exactly where he wants to be. He just took the job to get his foot in the door of this company. His problems are self-inflicted because he waits too long to do his work and doesn't go through the proper channels. A lot of his problems could be alleviated if he would handle them sooner and properly."

C8 suggests that the primary provoker emerges from the interactive system that develops from individual predispositions and system properties. The case histories were collected from one participant's point of view and thorough organizational analyses were not conducted. The quantitative data clearly shows that the primary provoker exhibits wide swings in display of behavior; the self-report data shows that the secondary provokers perceive themselves to be predominantly friendly, but they, too, exhibit alternating behaviors in these group settings. Given the wide range of perceived behavior, both primary and secondary provokers are suspect as the cause of the group's problems.

Participants were eager to talk about their group experiences; each wanted to do it privately and were very cautious about exposing themselves. The research assistants noted that the participants kept glancing over their shoulders and talked in low voices to encourage quiet communication. An air of secrecy pervaded the interview context. While the interview schedule did not specifically explore systematic properties, some of the responses to other questions clearly point to systematic "problems" in the organization that enhance individuals in the primary provoker role. As an example, one participant talked about how the pri ary provoker had been "allowed" to continue because of weak management at the next hierarchical level. It is clearly possible that systematic properties encourage the development of the piqued group.

C9 suggests that group members attempt to resolve the problem by "fixing" the secondary provoker rather than the interactive system. The interview schedule included the question: If you were called in as an outside consultant to intervene in this group situation, what suggestions would you make? The responses confirm this characteristic about members of piqued groups. Participants perceive it easier to "fix" the group's confusion by eliminating the primary provoker rather than looking for other group re-generating solutions.

The solutions provided by the participants included: 1) having the supervisor schedule a private one-on-one meeting with the primary provoker to discuss problems; 2) advocating the principle of agreeing to disagree and confronting the primary provoker in a meeting set aside from task activities to discuss relational problems; 3) having the supervisor overtly control the primary provoker, 4) hiring a new manager who can control the situation and the primary provoker, 4) having an organizational "friend" of the primary provoker conduct a counseling session to redirect energies or put the problem bluntly on the table, and 5) muzzling the primary provoker (this was a serious and often repeated recommendation). The participants suggested this last recommendation be accomplished by re-structuring the organization of the group to put the primary provoker

some place he or she could not interfere with the group's activities, or instructing the primary provoker to avoid interaction with others. Some participants could not provide recommendations except to strongly vocalize their feelings that they wanted no part of the solution--in other words, "leave me out of it." "Fixing" the primary provoker appeared to be the participants' preferred course of action.

Smith and Berg (1987) have explored the paradox of group life and find that groups can become "stuck." Their description is very similar to that of the piqued group. They note that group life is inherently paradoxical. "Paradox is contained within the very core of the conception of the group" (Smith & Berg, 1987, p. 15). Because of these inherent tendencies, groups become stuck in cyclic interactions. Reasons for these unbreakable cycles include: 1) energy spent on the problem without analyzing what produced the paralysis, 2) the very people who want change often act in ways that reinforce the things they want altered, 3) group members wait for the "other" person to make the first move, and 4) a we-they (or primary provoker-secondary provokers) relationship is established (Berg & Smith, 1987).

The data collected here supports these dynamics and confirms the sources of paradox that Smith and Berg (1987) identify: 1) bringing together individuals with a variety of skills, interests, and values; 2) a tendency for individuals and groups to move toward a characteristic polarization as a means of situational sense-making; and 3) the ambivalent attitudes of group members toward any holistic approach to understanding group phenomena. In each case history, the piqued groups dissolved their own opportunities to fruitfully discuss the tensions that limited the ability of group members to move from the "stuck" position. While paradox may be the catalyst and central to group process, it should never be allowed to escalate so far as to debilitate the group in achieving task completion and developing workable relationships in the organization.

Summary

Stohl and Schell have introduced important dysfunctional group dynamics that

require real-world solutions. Collecting data to verify their assertions vividly illustrates and expands their points. Breaking the farrago concept into three components--primary provoker, secondary provoker, and the piqued group--provides clear, yet related distinctions enabling researchers to continue to work in this important area of interpersonal and group interaction in the organizational context. Even though the interaction occurs in a larger organizational context, the underlying dyadic and group parameters should not be overshadowed by the larger whole within which these groups operate.

Although the group facilitation literature typically focuses on groups in counseling or self-analytical settings, that literature can be adapted to this situation. Movement in that direction is evidenced in the special issue of Management Communication Quarterly (August, 1989, Vol. 3, No. 1) devoted entirely to facilitation issues. In particular, Friedman (1989) suggests that group facilitators use metaphors to describe a group's dysfunctional status. Metaphors can be used to illustrate: 1) the inconsistencies that are common to piqued groups, and 2) integrative interaction that group members can emulate.

Researchers should not dismiss organizational groups that have not found a stage of harmonious relationships simply as being inefficient or ineffective. Rather, future attention should be devoted to providing organizational task groups with facilitation and self-analytical tools to help them become more task productive and relationally satisfying.

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